



STATE OF IOWA

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Mental Health Website Focuses on Year-Later Needs for Disaster Survivors

DES MOINES, Iowa – A new website is available to help Iowans find information about how to get help to deal with lingering stress in the wake of natural disasters a year ago.

The site, www.projectrecoveryiowa.org, features information about Project Recovery Iowa's services, including free confidential crisis counseling.

The information is important because the anniversary of a disaster can reawaken a wide range of feelings and reactions among survivors, according to Bill Gardam, administrator of the Mental Health and Disability Services division of the Iowa Department of Human Services.

"These reactions can be disturbing to survivors who do not anticipate them," he said. "It is normal for people to still have feelings of sadness, anxiousness, and stress. The anniversary and celebration activities are another step toward healing.

"Our hope is for this new site to increase access and awareness of Project Recovery Iowa's crisis counseling services and to encourage people to contact us for help," Gardam said. "Counseling can help people regain a sense of control over their lives."

Project Recovery Iowa, administered by the DHS, teaches coping skills, assesses immediate needs, and guides people to resources for ongoing support.

Free confidential counseling sessions can take place in homes or other settings rather than in offices or clinics. If needed, mental health professionals will also provide referrals to other long-term recovery resources.

The Iowa Concern Hotline, 1-800-447-1985, is the entry point for Project Recovery Iowa services. Confidential counseling is available at all hours.

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